**AP English 11 Language and Composition 2011-2012**

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**Course Description**: This is a college level course that focuses on critical thinking, reading, and writing through the study and discussion of narrative, expository, analytical, argumentative, and creative writing. The course AP English 11 prepares students for the AP Language and Composition test. Emphasis will be placed on the student's organization; personal, creative and analytical writing; research skills; discourse; vocabulary; reading; and control of language. Students will write effectively and confidently and will become skilled readers of pieces written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts. The focus for texts will be nonfiction works from a variety of sources, though we will read some fiction work. Students will also develop an understanding of how to read footnotes and how to read non-print materials such as pictures, comics, and graphs. The AP English 11 course assumes that students already understand and use Standard English grammar and that they are capable of taking ownership of their learning to further develop this understanding. This intense concentration on language use in the course will enhance students’ ability to use grammatical conventions both appropriately and with sophistication. Stylistic development will progress through emphasis on the following:

* Progression beyond the five paragraph essay
* Wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively
* Variety of sentence structures
* Logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
* Balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail
* Effective use of rhetoric, including controlling and identifying tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.
* Constructive critiques of peers’ writing
* Various methods of invention and drafting
* Critical reading of fiction and non-fiction materials
* Synthesis of materials

**Grades**

*The beautiful thing about writing is that you don’t have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon.*

* *Robert Cormier*

Because each student learns writing at a different rate, it is difficult for students to improve their writing and take necessary risks if they’re always worried about a grade. For this reason, all papers will contain my comments/feedback, **not** a score or grade\*. By collecting papers into a portfolio, both student and teacher can track improvements in the writing and look at the entire learning process holistically.

In addition to teacher feedback, students will also receive peer feedback and learn to self-assess their work as they become aware of strengths and weaknesses in their own writing. Students will learn to assess shorter “AP writes” using the AP scoring guide and come to understand that, while it may be hard to place a grade/score on an individual paper, it becomes quite clear the differences between papers and what elements make one paper *good* and another paper *better*.

To allow students the freedom to take risks and make mistakes and push outside of their comfort zone, students ***will not receive a grade on your transcript until the end of quarter II.*** THIS DOES NOT MEAN THEY WON’T BE ASSESSED! The feedback a student receives on each paper as well as during student/teacher meetings, peer review sessions, and self-assessment activities should provide each student with an on-going indication of where he or she stands in the class.

**All midterm grade reports and Quarter I** will show a **P** (pass/showing adequate progress) or **NC** (less than adequate progress or missing/consistently late work). In class at the end of Quarter I, students will write me a self-assessment letter (using the criteria listed on page 3) that explains what grade they feel they earned for the quarter and why. We will respond to your letter and either agree or disagree with each student while providing an explanation. Students will receive letter grades for quarters 2, 3, and 4 and both semesters.

Students will receive PLENTY of comments and feedback in the interim. Please feel free to ask questions at any time for clarification on quarter grades or feedback on individual papers.

\* One popular study about assessing student writing published in 1988 by Ruth Butler states that student achievement was highest when they received written task-oriented feedback and receiving a grade or scores on a paper hindered students’ learning by undermining interest and performance.

**GRADES ARE BASED ON:**

1. Classroom participation.

2. Level of preparedness for class/class discussions/individual meetings.

3. Usefulness/responsibility in group work, *especially* peer reviews.

4. Evidence of maintaining and utilizing new writing tools with each paper.

5. Improvement – Ultimately, improving is our goal. This means going beyond natural progress by taking risks with style and format. You should be moving beyond what was successful last year. Exceptional gains may be rewarded with a higher grade at the end of the term.

6. Test preparation – multiple choice and AP writes.

**Attendance**: Great attendance will help an individual’s grade. In order to truly practice writing, it is important to be here every day.

**Late work**: This class is taught like a workshop. For the workshop to “work,” students *must* share their writing in class and learn to evaluate their own and the writing of classmates. Please have *every* draft in on time to ensure a successful workshop! LATE WORK RECEIVES A ZERO!\*\* Students will have ample notice of paper due dates (2-3 weeks) and are expected to get papers to class even if they cannot attend.

\*\*NOTE: Each student may turn in *one* paper *one day late* per semester without consequence – no questions asked.

STUDENTS NEED TO COMPLETE *ALL* ASSIGNMENTS TO EARN A GRADE IN THE CLASS. *ANY* MISSING ASSIGNMENT RESULTS IN AN *NC* FOR THE CLASS.

All School Plagiarism Consequences Will Be Followed – Do Your Own Learning.

**Texts:**

1. *The Language of Composition,* Shea, Scanlon & Aufses, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008
2. *Writer’s Harbrace Handbook*, Glenn Gray, 3rd Edition, Thomson Wadsworth, 2007
3. *NCE’s Anthology of Nonfiction*, Gordon & Kuehner, NCE, 1996
4. *The Essay Connection*, Lynn Z. Bloom, 3rd Edition, D.C. Heath & Co., 1991
5. *A Small Place* by Jamaica Kincaid
6. *Ex Libris* by Anne Fadiman
7. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*  by Anne Fadiman
8. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
9. *Yellow Raft in Blue Water* by Michael Dorris
10. *This Boy’s Life*, by Tobias Wolff
11. *Professor and the Madman* by Simon Winchester
12. *Seabiscuit* by Laura Hillenbrand
13. *Ghost Soldiers* by Hampton Sides

**PHASE 1: Exploratory**

**(12 Weeks)**

The initial phase of this course introduces students to the fundamentals and basics of the course: audience, purpose, tone and rhetoric as it pertains to writing. These concepts are the foundation for all the material that follows.

During this phase we will establish a base point from which to assess each student. As you know, students do not receive a grade for the first quarter, due to the fact that they will be thrown into a very different type of course. **Writing is a skill, not a fact to be memorized**. Like other skills – musical learning, athletic endeavors, etc.- writing must be practiced and practiced and practiced some more in order to develop positively.

The first 12 weeks of the course will be spent laying the groundwork for what is to come. Over the past decade this method of focusing on development instead of points and grades has yielded great results. Students are allowed the freedom to experiment without worrying about receiving a negative impact in their point total or on their report cards.

Note that all phases of the course include discussions of grammatical, mechanical and other standard written English topics as needed (shown through student errors in papers and other work.)

**Skills and Concepts:**

- Tone, Diction, Syntax

- Audience and Purpose

- Rhetorical Modes, Devices, and Terms

- Introduction to author style

- Ability to read actively, interactively, and critically

- Introduction to the language of rhetoric

- Understanding and application of rubrics

- Ability to write for a specific purpose or effect

- Ability to write on demand

- Understanding and application of the rhetorical triangle, how the reader, writer, and material interact and relate to each other

- Introduction to AP Language test format

- Using and developing voice

- Peer review and using “Track Changes” in documents

**Major Assignments**

1. Personal Narrative Essay
2. Revision Presentation
3. Critical Analysis
4. *Ex Libris* Analysis of Tone and Voice
5. *A Small Place* Analysis of Rhetorical Devices – Purpose and usage
6. Definition Essay

**PHASE 2: Development**

**(12 Weeks)**

The developmental phase of this course assists the students in totally grasping the basic concepts, we will spend December reiterating and drilling the main points and giving them a chance to demonstrate their improvement and mastery of the basic elements. This phase includes attention to Revision, Rhetorical Terminology, AP Writes, and introduces AP multiple choice questions.

During this phase we will encourage application of the fundamental concepts learned in phase 1. For example, students will not only be able to identify rhetorical devices in professional writing, but will begin to utilize rhetorical devices in their own writing. Activities and AP writes will echo the concepts addressed in the major writing assignments. For example, when working on the argumentation paper, we will practice argumentation AP writes.

**Skills and Concepts:**

- Tone, Diction, Syntax

- Audience and Purpose

- Rhetorical Modes, Devices, and Terms

- Ability to read actively, interactively, and critically

- Application of the language of rhetoric

- Ability to write for a specific purpose or effect

- Ability to write on demand

- Understanding and application of the rhetorical triangle, how the reader, writer, and material interact and relate to each other

- Using and developing voice

- Peer review and using “Track Changes” in documents

- Introduction of Argumentation Concepts

- Logical Fallacies

- Incorporating critical sources

- MLA Documentation

**Major Assignments**

1. *Spirit Catches You* Rhetorical Analysis Paper/Presentation
2. Timed Writing Unit
3. *In Cold Blood* Rhetorical Analysis/Argumentation
4. Argumentation Paper
5. Opinion Piece

**PHASE 3: Performance & Vertical Teaming**

**(12 Weeks)**

The final phase of this course prepares students to take the AP Language and Composition exam. This phase focuses on synthesis concepts and activities, as well as increases the frequency of AP writes and multiple choice practice questions. We encourage review of initial rhetorical concepts; however, we expect that students now incorporate such concepts in their own writing. Students in this phase are expected to work toward not only answering AP prompts, but show an understanding of the AP scoring guidelines and take an active role in their own assessment.

After the AP exam, we will shift the focus of the course to link to concepts found in AP English 12 course and the AP Literature and Composition test. We will focus on transferring the knowledge learned in English 11 to the senior year’s English course expectations.

**Skills and Concepts:**

- Review Tone, Diction, Syntax

- Review Audience and Purpose

- Review Rhetorical Modes, Devices, and Terms

- Ability to read actively, interactively, and critically

- Application of the language of rhetoric

- Ability to write for a specific purpose or effect

- Ability to write on demand

- Multiple choice question strategies

- Understanding and application of the rhetorical triangle, how the reader, writer, and material interact and relate to each other

- Using and developing voice

- Peer review and using “Track Changes” in documents

- Synthesis concepts

- Discuss differences between non-fiction and fiction

- Evaluating sources

- Literary Lenses

**Major Assignments**

1. Synthesis Assignment

2. Current Event Synthesis Paper

3. Practice AP exam

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I agree that I have read and understand the expectations set forth for me/my student for this class.

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Student Signature Parent/Guardian Signature